



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Development*

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**2011/2073(INI)**

15.11.2011

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on budgetary control of EU humanitarian aid managed by ECHO  
(2011/2073(INI))

Rapporteur: Michèle Striffler

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses the fact that the European Union must strengthen its reaction capacity, given the growing number of major natural disasters; with this in mind, recalls that the European Parliament has for many years been calling for a more realistic humanitarian budget in the interests of remedying the chronic underfunding of the relevant budget lines, making it possible to provide a margin of financial manoeuvre throughout the financial year, and maintaining a coherent balance between the financing of measures to prevent humanitarian disasters and measures to ensure rapid responses to natural and man-made disasters; welcomes the recent Commission Communication on the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, which provides for an increase in the humanitarian aid instrument budget of EUR 6.4 billion over this period (i.e. an annual average of EUR 915 million, as against EUR 813 million in 2007-2013); also notes with satisfaction the increase in the emergency aid reserve for the same period, bringing it to EUR 2.5 billion, as well as the proposal for unspent funds in the reserve to be carried over to the following year, and asks the Commission to ensure that these funds continue to be earmarked principally for urgent humanitarian needs;
2. Asks for the EU budget to support actions designed to anticipate disasters, prepare for them, avert them and react more quickly to them, as well as those enabling greater flexibility in launching development measures as a means of emerging from crisis situations; finds it regrettable that concrete progress on the link between emergency aid, rehabilitation and development remains limited despite the many political commitments made in recent years; calls therefore for more and better-managed resources to be deployed to guarantee continuity of aid in the transition phase between emergency and development, and for thought to be given to achieving greater flexibility and complementarity of the existing financial mechanisms, particularly in the context of EDF and DCI country/regional strategy papers; calls for particular care for children, as well as expectant mothers and mothers of young children, with regard to the provision of food, clothing, evacuation and transportation, and of medical facilities with a view to preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, as priority areas under the existing financial mechanisms;
3. Recommends that this transitional, rehabilitation phase between emergency aid and development should primarily focus its attention on the capacity-building of local institutions and a high level of involvement of local NGOs and associations in the phases of planning and implementation in order to facilitate and build the basis for high-quality and effective human development programmes;
4. Recognises the benefits of seeking new arrangements for financing by DG ECHO, together with its partners; calls at the same time for the diversity of the actors involved in financing and implementing the European humanitarian programmes – the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, NGOs – to be borne in mind, given that disasters often transcend national borders and require multilateral,

coordinated responses; encourages the work of strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders and increasing assessment and rapid response capabilities on the ground through DG ECHO's offices as well as field experts;

5. Emphasises the high-quality work carried out by DG ECHO's partners, achieved by means of an effective selection method – such as the Framework Partnership Agreement – and the development of standards and practices applicable in the humanitarian field; stresses also that effective monitoring of the use of funds in the form of audits of the partners carried out by private audit firms is essential and helps to legitimise the humanitarian sector; notes, however, in the interests of safeguarding the diversity of the partners and guaranteeing access for small and medium-sized NGOs, the complexity of the administrative access procedures, the excessive administrative charges, which are very costly for NGOs, and the difficulties experienced with undergoing audits, given the lack of human resources, and calls for the tools used to be appropriate to the specific requirements of the humanitarian sector and to local requirements, so that humanitarian aid is targeted appropriately and coordinated action by the various aid organisations involved begins at an early stage;
6. Commends DG ECHO's efforts to promote the use of innovative approaches such as the cash-based approach, and in particular unconditional transfers, which are directed at the most vulnerable groups; notes that, by using local markets, these approaches can be more efficient than assistance in kind, and do not necessarily carry a greater fiduciary risk; urges DG ECHO, therefore, to continue to develop these cash-based approaches and to encourage its partners to use them.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	7.11.2011
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 24 -: 0 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Thijs Berman, Leonidas Donskis, Charles Goerens, András Gyürk, Eva Joly, Franziska Keller, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Norbert Neuser, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Michèle Striffler, Alf Svensson, Patrice Tirolien, Ivo Vajgl, Anna Záborská
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Santiago Fisas Ayxela, Fiona Hall, Krzysztof Lisek, Isabella Lövin, Horst Schnellhardt, Giancarlo Scottà, Jan Zahradil
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Josefa Andrés Barea, Sophie Auconie, João Ferreira